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SUBJECT: PREAH VIHEAR TEMPLE: THAI GOVERNMENT REVIEWS NEW
CAMBODIAN MAP

REF: STATE 01486

¶1. (SBU) MFA Deputy Director General Pisanu Suvanajata told Poloff on June 11 that, after completion of an ongoing survey by the military and the Royal Thai Survey Department, the RTG would formulate a position on the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) map recently presented to the RTG in Paris. As of June 13, representatives from both groups were at the temple site, checking the accuracy of the map and verifying that the temple perimeters are accurate and drawn to scale. Pisanu said that the revised map was an improvement over the previous map, and that it demonstrated the RGC's positive attitude towards the negotiation process.

¶2. (SBU) Once the survey is complete, the military technicians will present the results to the MFA and to the National Security Council. Pisanu believed that the RTG would accept the map's temple perimeters, and he confirmed that the inscription would be limited to the temple structure. He added that the map did not have any indication of country borders, just an outline of terrain, and that, as drawn, the temple perimeters seemed consistent with RTG demands not to include on the map any disputed land surrounding the temple.

¶3. (SBU) Pisanu dismissed a public statement by Democrat Party Deputy Leader Alongkorn Pollabutr rejecting joint Thailand-Cambodia management of the temple and urging opposition to the RGC's pursuit of World Heritage status for the temple. The MFA issued a press release on June 10 clarifying that the RTG's support of the RGC's effort to obtain World Heritage status for the temple will not result in loss of territorial jurisdiction for Thailand because just the temple will be registered. The RTG was only concerned that the registration would include disputed areas.

COMMENT

¶4. (SBU) MFA officials give every sign of confidence that the new map will be approved and that Thailand will be able to support the temple's designation as a World Heritage site.

The issue remains somewhat sensitive, however, "anonymous sources" told the press this week that the army believed disputed land still lay within the new map's temple perimeter, and there are also reports of small local protests by Thai villagers near the temple complex against Cambodians living on the temple outskirts. Border issues are often emotional; the government may have to face down some domestic opposition to its current plan to support the site's inscription.

ENTWISTLE